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## CRITICAL NOTICE.

## ROGER BACON'S GREEK AND HEBREW GRAMMARS.

*The Greek Grammar of Roger Bacon, and a Fragment of his Hebrew Grammar.* Edited from the MSS. with introduction and notes by the Rev. EDMOND NOLAN, B.A., and Dr. S. A. HIRSCH. pp. lxxv, 212 (Cambridge, University Press, 1902).

THE importance of Roger Bacon in the history of learning, and especially of Jewish learning, has already been clearly pointed out by Dr. Hirsch in this Review (October, 1899). The publication of the present handsome volume is the fulfilment of the promise then made, and will everywhere be gladly received as a welcome and precious contribution to knowledge.

Bacon was a *vox clamantis in eremo*, a marvellously broad and luminous intellect moving in the dark and cramped world of scholasticism. As Dr. Hirsch has shown, he possessed the true philological instinct; and he had few or none to follow in his footsteps. To his singularly interesting personality full justice is done by the editors of this book, of which the introduction is a model of clear and scholarly exposition.

The Greek Grammar consists of two works hitherto unedited—the Oxford Grammar (Corpus Christi Coll., MS. 148) and a Cambridge fragment (University Library, Ff. 6. 13). Of the former Bacon's authorship has never been contested, though the work itself bears no name; and the latter, which is equally anonymous, Mr. Nolan proves to be a draft of the first part of the same or of a similar work.

The Oxford Grammar consists of three parts. Part i, in 2 *Distinctiones*, contains the alphabet and the most elementary rules for reading, writing, and construing Greek, with exercises. The 8 *Distinctiones* of Part ii are occupied with a more detailed exposition of phonology and prosody. Part iii, originally in 6 *Distinctiones*, now lacks *Distinct.* 1, 2, and the first four chapters of 3; the remainder contains an *Accidence*, breaking off before the athematic conjugations are reached. This gives us the greater part of an elementary grammar; the

advanced treatise to which Bacon refers (iii. 6 § 3) was perhaps never written by him; it certainly has never been found.

Dr. Hirsch on the whole inclines to believe that the main source of this grammar comes through Priscian from Theodosius, though he does not fail to point out that Bacon also used other sources, including Erotemata ultimately derived from the school of Dionysius Thrax. Strong arguments have been adduced by Heiberg (*Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, vol. 9, pp. 472 ff.) for deriving Bacon's grammar from some Byzantine manual. Against these Dr. Hirsch argues with much ability, and, we believe, with success (pp. lix–lxiii).

Bacon's knowledge of Greek was as much as any man could attain in the thirteenth century. It was necessarily the learning of the grammarian, not of the Hellenist, and imperfect at that<sup>1</sup>. It could not be otherwise in an age when manuscripts of classical authors were almost unknown to western Europe. But withal it bears the distinctive mark of the *Urkraft* of his intellect. He bitterly comments on the miserable blunders of the medieval *Latini*. He rejects the modern Greeks' elaborately artificial system of nominal accidence; *debemus enim reducere ad principalia, ut artificiales regule stent penes principalia, magis quam penes accidentalia* (p. 147). He even criticises the great Priscian, in a passage showing a philological insight that in a more literary age might have made him not unworthy to rank with Bentley (pp. 131 f.; cf. xxiii f.).

The editors have made it their first object to give an exact transcription of the MSS., and hence all the scribes' blunders appear in the text with footnotes in most cases to correct them when there is any danger of the reader being misled. A captious critic might urge the desirability of correcting the scribes' errors in the text and registering them in the footnotes. But on the whole we think the editors have done wisely; our only regret is that these corrective notes are not quite numerous enough, and that Mr. Nolan has left a few textual sores unhealed<sup>2</sup>. These, however, are mere trifles compared with the merits of a work which claims the gratitude of every Hellenist.

<sup>1</sup> Thus p. 63 *cynos est canis*; p. 69 *archos nihil est quia archon est princeps*; p. 115 *corripitur heremus* (scil. ἑρημος), *usu licet producat*; and he declines βῶξ βακτός, πέρδιξ πέρδικτος!

<sup>2</sup> Thus p. 145 is *alx algos* Bacon's own mistake for the grammarians' paradigm ἀλξ ἀλκί, or a scribe's blunder for αἰξ αἰγός? On the same page it may be noted that the paradigm μύκλωψ μύκλωπος given in the text, for which Mr. Nolan suggests μῶλωψ, should probably be corrected to κύκλωψ, which is also a paradigm in the early grammars; as every palaeographer knows, κ and μ are always liable to be confused with each other.

The fragmentary Hebrew Grammar (Cambridge University Library, Ff. 6. 13) is sadly exiguous. But in its small compass it has much of interest, and is edited by Dr. Hirsch with his customary acumen and scholarship. It begins with an alphabet in which six letters are reckoned as vowels, viz. א ה ו ה י ע, an error shared by no other medieval Christian Hebraist, as the editor points out. The letters כ צ נ פ ז are distinguished in their medial and final forms as *primum* and *secundum*; and this difference is confused with that produced by dagesh. Only one value of ח is given; כ and פ are said to have double values in modern pronunciation, but their primitive sounds are declared to be only *ch* and *ph*.

As might be expected, the Hebrew is laid on the Procrustean bed of medieval grammar. It is interesting to find the half-truth enunciated that *quandocunque . . . invenitur etha* (i.e. אֵת) *semper sequitur accusativus casus*. A curious point is well brought out in a note by Dr. Hirsch. The theory of the six vowels suggested the propriety of inserting one of these to mark the distinct utterance of a vowel; hence Bacon gives us the strange form בְּנֵאִי<sup>1</sup>.

The well-known cypher of אֶתְכֵּשׁ, described in the *Opus Minus*, is also expounded here. The next paragraph is of interest for the history of Hebrew sounds. It mentions the custom of writing a line over a letter to mark the absence of dagesh, and ascribes a spirant sound to ט when so written: *sonat quasi zz, ut adamas. Nam d sic sonamus sicut zz, non in forti sono, vero in proprio. Caph tamen secundum* (i.e. ט) *sonat fortiter* (as a guttural stopped consonant?) *si linea sit supra, et debiliter* (as spirant?) *si habeat punctum intra. Sin vero punctatur aliquando in dextera parte supra vel intra, sic ט, tunc sonat fortiter. Set quando punctatur a sinistra parte supra vel intra, tunc sonat debiliter ט*. Then follows an exposition of the particles and accents with special reference to the Greek.

In fine, we may say that this *Editio Prima* is in every respect a worthy monument to Roger Bacon.

L. D. BARNETT.

<sup>1</sup> Seemingly the א was suggested by other forms of the same paradigm. Bacon has just before given בֵּי, and immediately afterwards gives בִּי; he evidently thought a 'vowel' necessary after the root in all such forms.